

## From Silence to Strength: A Women-centered Framework in Faith-based Community Organizing

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**Abstract:** Three models of community organizing (CO) are commonly used as paradigms: the conventional Alinsky's, faith-based community organizing (FBCO), and the women-centered model. However, few studies on CO that focus on integrating these three models as a comprehensive lens of analysis. The women-centered community organizing paradigm lacks religio-spiritual complexity, which hinders the acceptance of women empowerment's message among religious communities. This study aims to propose a practical community-organizing model by synthesizing three different community-organizing models carried out by religious-based women non-governmental organizations. This study combines a systemic literature review method and a qualitative approach to study women-based CSOs. The finding indicates that integrating three community organizing (CO) models effectively empowers women.

**Keywords:** community development; community empowerment; community organizing; faith-based community organizing; women-centered community organizing

**Abstrak:** Tiga model pengorganisasian masyarakat (PM) yang digunakan sebagai model utama: Model konvensional Alinsky, Pengorganisasian Masyarakat Berbasis Agama, dan model yang berpusat pada perempuan. Namun, hanya sedikit penelitian yang mengintegrasikan ketiga paradigma tersebut secara komprehensif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan model PM yang praktis dengan mensintesis tiga model yang sudah ada, dengan fokus pada tantangan pendekatan yang berpusat pada perempuan dalam konteks agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur yang sistematis dan analisis kualitatif terhadap organisasi masyarakat sipil (OMS) berbasis perempuan untuk meng-eksplorasi strategi pengorganisasian masyarakat yang efektif. Integrasi ketiga model PM terbukti menjadi metode yang efektif untuk memberdayakan perempuan, terutama dalam komunitas keagamaan. Pendekatan yang disintesis ini me-ningkatkan pesan pemberdayaan perempuan dan mendorong penerimaan yang lebih besar di dalam organisasi berbasis agama.

**Kata Kunci:** pengembangan masyarakat; pemberdayaan masyarakat; pengorganisasian masyarakat; pengorganisasian masyarakat berbasis agama; pengorganisasian masyarakat yang berpusat pada perempuan

## A. Introduction

Community Organizing (CO) has been a crucial tool for social change, empowering individuals, communities, and marginalized communities to address pressing issues, advocate for their rights, and create positive social change.<sup>1</sup> It focuses on building strong relationships, developing leadership skills, and mobilizing communities to take collective action. Community organizers play a crucial role in fostering relationships based on trust and understanding, ensuring that their efforts are sustainable and reflective of the diverse needs and voices within the community.<sup>2</sup> This strategy enables individuals to establish connections beyond their immediate requirements, promoting unity and solidarity among community members, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and belonging, and facilitating sustainable and impactful change.

In the middle of the 20th century, community organizing started gaining traction as a topic of study, particularly in the United States. At that time, academics and professionals tried to understand and analyze the dynamics, strategies, and impacts of community-based efforts to address social, economic, and political issues. Around the 1930s to 1940s, there may not have been a lot of official academic research on community organizing around the beginning of the 20th century, but the framework for understanding community-based social movements was built during this time. For instance, in the 1930s Saul Alinsky, who is frequently referred to as the “father” of modern community organizing, established the groundwork for the research that came after it. Both “Reveille for Radicals” (first published in 1946) and “Rules for Radicals” (first published in 1971), two books written by Saul Alinsky, offered insightful and actionable information regarding community organizing tactics and strategies.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was significant growth in university programs and centers dedicated to community organizing and development.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Fisher, James DeFilippis, and Eric Shragge, “Contested Community: A Selected and Critical History of Community Organizing” ed. Ram A Cnaan and Carl Milofsky (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 281–97, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77416-9\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77416-9_17).

<sup>2</sup> Richard L Wood, “Religion, Faith-based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice,” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 385–99, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511807961.026>.

<sup>3</sup> Saul David Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1989); Saul David Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (New York: The Gallery Press, 1989).

These programs were crucial in the development of research and academic pursuits in this area, and their impact cannot be overstated.<sup>4</sup> During this period, some educational and research institutions, such as the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and the Center for the Study of Community Organizing at Temple University, were established as leading institutions in community organizing. In summary, community organizing began to attract research interest in the mid-20th century, with its roots in earlier social movements. It then developed into a multidisciplinary field of study, with researchers exploring various aspects of organizing, empowerment, and social change.

On the other hand, since religion has a unique role in development, the significance of religion in many kinds of social initiatives was recognized. Religion has been demonstrated through various social projects that have included religious congregations, leading to the emergence of faith-based community organizing as a research object that contributed to the rise of prominent organizations like the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and the Gamaliel Foundation in the United States.<sup>5</sup> These organizations rooted in religious traditions. They began to gain attention for their effective community organizing efforts. Several studies initiatives done by FBCO among that have focused on religion and development<sup>6</sup> the role of religion in politics,<sup>7</sup> and the contribution of religious organizations to community development, which all played a role in the emergence of research on faith-based community organizing.<sup>8</sup> It may be traced back to the latter half of the 20th century, along with a rising realization of the crucial role that religious institutions and faith-based organizations play in addressing social and economic concerns within

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<sup>4</sup> Fisher, DeFilippis, and Shragge, "Contested Community: A Selected and Critical History of Community Organizing" 281–97.

<sup>5</sup> Edward T Walker, "Organizations, Congregation-Based," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Wiley, 2013), 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm146>.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings, eds., *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 17–45, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230371262>.

<sup>7</sup> Jeff Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics* (London: Routledge, 2014), 63–84, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315841700>.

<sup>8</sup> Brad Fulton, "Fostering Muslim Civic Engagement through Faith-based Community Organizing," *Journal on Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society* 1, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.18060/21406>.

communities and become important momentum to consider it a research object.<sup>9</sup>

The research on faith-based community organizing covers a wide range of themes and focus areas, including the issue related to religion and social justice, focusing by examining the theological and ethical foundations of faith-based organizing<sup>10</sup> and how religious teachings inspire community engagement.<sup>11</sup> Community empowerment the focus of this area of studies investigating how faith-based organizations empower marginalized communities by fostering leadership development and civic engagement.<sup>12</sup> Interfaith collaboration which focusing in exploring how faith-based organizing efforts often involve interfaith collaborations and the challenges and benefits of such partnerships.<sup>13</sup> Research has also focused on the effectiveness of faith-based organizations in advocating for policy changes at local, state, and national levels. Several academic journals and publications have dedicated space to research on faith-based community organizing, and examples include the "Journal of Religion and Society," "Journal of Community Practice," and book like "Faith-based Organizing: The State of the Field."<sup>14</sup> Hence, research on faith-based community organizing has contributed to academic understanding, influenced public policy discussions, and shaped the strategies of community organizers and religious institutions.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of faith-based community organizations' role in promoting social change and addressing local

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<sup>9</sup> Luca Ozzano and Sara Fenoglio, "Conceptions of Power and Role of Religion in Community Organising," *Religions* 13, no. 9 (2022): 837, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090837>.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Christens, Diana L. Jones, and Paul W. Speer, "Power, Conflict, and Spirituality: A Qualitative Study of Faith-based Community Organizing," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 1 (2008): 7–16, <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-9.1.330>.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Chaves and William Tsitsos, "Congregations and Social Services: What They Do, How They Do It, and with Whom," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (2001): 660–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764001304003>.

<sup>12</sup> Michelle Mariko Oyakawa, "'Turning Private Pain into Public Action': Constructing Activist-Leader Identities in Faith-based Community Organizing." [Master Thesis] (The Ohio State University, 2012), 6–16, [http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc\\_num=osu1341340078](http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=osu1341340078).

<sup>13</sup> Nur Uysal, "Peacebuilding through Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of Faith-based NGOs," in *Communicating Differences* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 265–78, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137499264_17).

<sup>14</sup> Mark R. Warren and Richard L. Wood, *Faith-based Community Organizing: The State of the Field* (New York: Interfaith Funders, 2001); Richard L. Wood and Brad R. Fulton, *A Shared Future: Faith-based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

issues. These organizations often have a deep understanding of the needs and values of their communities, allowing them to mobilize resources and engage community members in meaningful ways effectively. These organizations promote compassion, justice, and equality through their faith-based principles, which are crucial in creating a more inclusive and equitable society.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, faith-based community organizations often serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration among different religious and cultural groups, fostering interfaith understanding and cooperation. These organizations often have deep roots within communities and can mobilize resources and support to bring about meaningful impact. Faith-based organizations also have a unique ability to bridge the gap between individuals and institutions, providing a moral framework and a sense of purpose to advocacy efforts.

Furthermore, the influence of faith-based organizations extends beyond their ability to mobilize individuals. They often have well-established networks and connections with other nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations. These connections allow them to access additional resources, expertise, and funding, thus enhancing their capacity to create lasting change.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, faith-based organizations can leverage their moral authority to influence public opinion and policymaking, amplifying their advocacy efforts and ensuring that the concerns of their constituents are heard and addressed. In this way, faith-based organizations are critical in advancing social justice and promoting a more compassionate and inclusive society.

While there is growing body of work on women-centered community organizing theory and practice, for example Stall and Stoecker, characterized by the term 'women-centered model', prioritize relationship-building, shared leadership, and addressing issues often seen as 'private' or impacting women.<sup>17</sup> Mizrahi shed light on the under-research of gender influence on community

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<sup>15</sup> Gerard Clarke, "Faith-based Organizations and International Development: An Overview," in *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 17–45, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230371262\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230371262_2); Paul W Speer, "Congregation-Based Community Organizing," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Community Empowerment* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 110–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009153720.006>.

<sup>16</sup> Christens, Jones, and Speer, "Power, Conflict, and Spirituality: A Qualitative Study of Faith-based Community Organizing," 8–14.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker, "Community Organizing or Organizing Community?: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment," *Gender & Society* 12, no. 6 (1998): 729–56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124398012006008>.

organizing. It reveals that women organizers are more likely to recognize how their social position shapes their work, while men are less likely to consider gender as a factor.<sup>18</sup> Although studies on the Alinsky model and faith-based community organizing have been influential in driving social change, they have been criticized for their lack of focus on intersectionality and not adequately examining how gender impacts the experiences and approaches and how gender intersects with other social categories like race, class, and ability. For example, Wood discusses how the organizational culture of religious groups influences the success of faith-based community organizing. He argues that certain aspects of religious culture can enable or constrain political participation, ultimately impacting the organization's ability to effect social change and develop democratic leadership within marginalized communities,<sup>19</sup> similarly, Oyakawa.<sup>20</sup> Jones study engagement<sup>21</sup> found that participation in faith-based community organizing showed higher level of civic engagement where he concludes a strong link between faith-based participation and civic engagement. While academic literature has primarily focused on the Alinsky, faith-based, and women-centered models separately, an integrated approach leveraging their strength can provide new insight for empowering marginalized communities and driving social change effectively.

This study introduces a comprehensive framework for community organizing studies by integrating three distinct yet complementary models: Alinsky's tactical approach, the relational power of faith-based organizing, and the gender-focused perspective of women-centered community organizing. While previous research has primarily examined these models in isolation, this study explores how their combined strengths can more effectively empower marginalized communities and drive social change. Additionally, it highlights

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<sup>18</sup> Terry Mizrahi and Jessica Greenawalt, "Gender Differences and Intersectionality in Community Organizing," *Journal of Community Practice* 25, no. 3-4 (2017): 432-63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2017.1356784>.

<sup>19</sup> Wood, 'Religion, Faith-based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice,' 80-99; Christens, Jones, and Speer, 'Power, Conflict, and Spirituality: A Qualitative Study of Faith-based Community Organizing', 8-14.

<sup>20</sup> Oyakawa, "'Turning Private Pain into Public Action': Constructing Activist-Leader Identities in Faith-based Community Organizing."

<sup>21</sup> Diana L Jones, "The Organizational Context of Faith-based Community Organizing: Effects on Member Civic Engagement," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 25, no. 5 (2015): 361-74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2014.930363>.

the growing acknowledgment among faith-based organizations of the need to incorporate gender equality and intersectionality into their work, addressing a critical gap in existing research. By focusing on women-led, faith-based non-governmental organizations, this study contributes a fresh perspective on the evolving dynamics of community organizing. It offers practical insights for fostering inclusive and sustainable change.

This study proposed a practical integrated community organizing model by bringing together the Alinsky model's tactical strength, the faith-based approach's relational power, and the gendered-centered focus of the women-centered model.

Nevertheless, there is a growing acknowledgment among faith-based organizations of the necessity of incorporating gender equality and intersectionality into their work. This study examines the progression of community organizing research from Alinsky's approach to the faith-based and women-centered models. It does so by analyzing the effective role of women faith-based non-governmental organizations in women-centered community organizing, incorporating integrated best practices. By drawing on the strength of these diverse models, this study offers a comprehensive framework for community organizers to empower marginalized communities and drive meaningful social change.

## **B. Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a digital library research methodology. The data collection process involves conducting a comprehensive literature review on community organizing studies using specific search keywords such as community organizing, faith-based community organizing, women community organizing, and organizing community. It is accomplished by utilizing the Publish or Perish application, which allows for exploring approximately 200 relevant community organizing studies for each keyword. The literature review encompasses sources from Semantic Scholar, Google Scholar, and Connected Papers, spanning the past 10 years. This study compiles multiple scholarly investigations pertaining to the field of community organizing and community empowerment. Subsequently, the outcomes of this study's mapping process were carefully recorded, systematized, and analyzed to comprehensively depict the gaps within the realm of community organizing research.

## C. Results and Discussion

### Community Organizing as Field of Study

The field of community organizing studies has long been dominated by three distinct models that have served as a prominent paradigm for understanding and implementing community organizing practice: the conventional Alinsky model, emphasizing power dynamics and confrontational tactics, has been instrumental in catalyzing social movements.<sup>22</sup> The faith-based model,<sup>23</sup> in turn, has leveraged the moral authority and organizational strength of religious communities to advocate for justice. Meanwhile, the women-centered framework championed by scholars like Stall and Stoecker<sup>24</sup> recognize the critical role of gender equity in fostering meaningful and inclusive social change.<sup>25</sup> Despite their widespread influence, few studies focused on exploring the potential benefits of integrating these three models into a more comprehensive analytical framework that could offer a more holistic and inclusive approach to community organizing.

Community organizing is an ever-evolving field that uses various theoretical frameworks and operational models to direct its strategies and activities. These models and theories offer a framework that can be utilized to understand the dynamics of communities, bring together resources, and advocate for social change. In the middle of the 20th century, community organizing started to gain traction as a topic of study, particularly in the United States. At that time, academics and professionals were trying to understand and analyze the dynamics, strategies, and impacts of community-based efforts to address social, economic, and political issues. Around the 1930s to 1940s, there may not have been a lot of official academic research on community organizing around the beginning of the 20th century, the framework for understanding

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<sup>22</sup> Allinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, 99–153.

<sup>23</sup> Wood, "Religion, Faith-based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice," 80–99.

<sup>24</sup> Stall and Stoecker, "Community Organizing or Organizing Community?: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment," 729–56.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah B Garlington et al., "Making Structural Change with Relational Power: A Gender Analysis of Faith-based Community Organizing" *Social Inclusion* 7, no. 2 (2019): 24–32, <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i2.1961>; Mary Ann Ford Flaherty and Richard L. Wood, "Renewing Congregations: The Contribution of Faith-based Community Organizing" 2002, 2–36, [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/soc\\_fsp/6](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/soc_fsp/6).



community-based social movements was built during this time. For instance, in the 1930s by Saul Alinsky, who is frequently referred to as the “father” of modern community organizing, established the groundwork for the research that came after it. Both “Reveille for Radicals” (1946) and “Rules for Radicals” (1971), two books written by Saul Alinsky, offered insightful and actionable information regarding community organizing tactics and strategies.<sup>26</sup>

The expansion of academic interest at around the 1950s and 1960s during the civil rights movement and the war on poverty era in the United States, there was a considerable expansion of academic interest in community organizing. This development of academic interest occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. Researchers from all walks of life, including academics, social scientists, and community organizers, started looking into the many facets of community organizing, such as its history, techniques, and results.<sup>27</sup> The expansion of academic programs during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, there was a proliferation of university programs and centers devoted to community organizing and community development. These programs were crucial in developing research and academic pursuits in this area, and their impact cannot be overstated.<sup>28</sup> During this period, some educational and research institutions, such as the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and the Center for the Study of Community Organizing at Temple University, established themselves as leading institutions in community organizing.

Research in community organizing initially focused on various topics, one of which was connected to the empowerment of communities.<sup>29</sup> In this line of inquiry, academics studied how community organizations may assist disadvantaged people in becoming more empowered and engaged in their communities. The study of community organizing frequently crossed with the study of social movements since both seek to achieve the same goals of collective action and social transformation.<sup>30</sup> Participation and Democracy was

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<sup>26</sup> Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, 99–153; Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 11–62.

<sup>27</sup> Fisher, DeFilippis, and Shragge, “Contested Community: A Selected and Critical History of Community Organizing” 27.

<sup>28</sup> Fisher, DeFilippis, and Shragge, 281–97.

<sup>29</sup> David S Meyer and Debra C Minkoff, “Conceptualizing Political Opportunity,” *Social Forces* 82, no. 4 (2004): 1457–92, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598442>.

<sup>30</sup> Sidney G Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 69–70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511973529>.

a conference that brought together academics to discuss the significance that community organization plays in encouraging democratic participation and the growth of communities.<sup>31</sup>

Community organizing has evolved into a multidisciplinary study area, with researchers examining various facets of organizing, empowerment, and social change. As community organizing studies continue to develop, previous insights and frameworks are instrumental in advancing the comprehension of community organization for impactful social change. From the pioneering work of individuals such as Saul Alinsky to the contemporary emphasis on intersectionality and inclusivity, research in this field consistently underscores the transformative potential of collective action and community-based strategies.

### **Bridging Faith and Development: Exploring Faith-based Community Organizing**

Fifty years of international development coincided with the distinct secularization of public policy, heavily influenced by secularization theory; thus, religious institutions, actions, and consciousness lost their social significance over time as society modernized. It is evident in the negligence of religious variables in favor of other sociological attributes and in materialistic determinants—the neglect of non-material motivation, especially religious ones in explaining individual or institutional behavior.<sup>32</sup>

However, the significance of religion has been demonstrated through various social projects that have included religious congregations. The emergence of faith-based community organizing as a research object can be attributed to the rise of prominent organizations like the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and the Gamaliel Foundation in the United States.<sup>33</sup> These organizations, rooted in religious traditions, began to gain attention for their effective community organizing efforts. These projects, along with others that have focused on religion and development,<sup>34</sup> the role of religion in politics,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, "Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality" (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1987), 25–102.

<sup>32</sup> Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics*, 4–19.

<sup>33</sup> Walker, "Organizations, Congregation-Based," 1–5.

<sup>34</sup> Clarke and Jennings, *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, 17–45.

and the contribution of religious organizations to community development, have all played a role in the emergence of research on faith-based community organizing.<sup>36</sup> It may be traced back to the latter half of the 20th century when there was a rising realization of the crucial role that religious institutions and faith-based organizations could play in addressing social and economic concerns within communities. This recognition led to the creation of this experience as a research object.<sup>37</sup>

Since 1997, development organizations have become more conscious of the salience of religion in international development politics and its import for development policy and practice; thus in 1997, the President of the World Bank launched a small 'Directorate on Faith' within the bank, which ultimately led to series of conferences 1998, 1999 and 2002 bringing together donor representatives and faith leaders. The published proceedings of these and related conferences point to the 'faith and development' interface as a significant new theme in development policy and discourse.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Millennium Declaration was agreed at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000, and the associated Millennium Development lies in the heart of this new engagement. The declaration is seen in some quarters as a 'covenant', a solemn contract or agreement with quasi-religious or spiritual significance.<sup>39</sup>

An important characteristic of faith-based community organizing (FBCO) is that it focuses on shared beliefs, moral framework, and mobilizing resources and relationships within faith communities. These communities often possess diverse resources, such as physical spaces, financial contributions, volunteers, and skilled individuals, which can be mobilized for organizing efforts. FBCO also emphasizes building power through relationships and fostering dialogue and understanding to achieve shared goals. Faith leaders and institutions often hold moral authority within their communities, which can be leveraged to influence

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<sup>35</sup> Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics*, 4–19.

<sup>36</sup> Fulton, "Fostering Muslim Civic Engagement through Faith-based Community Organizing," 23–35.

<sup>37</sup> Ozzano and Fenoglio, "Conceptions of Power and Role of Religion in Community Organising," 2–16.

<sup>38</sup> Clarke and Jennings, *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, 17–45.

<sup>39</sup> Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics*, 4–19.

public opinion and advocate for policy changes. FBCO seeks to address individual needs and systemic injustices, focusing on spiritual growth and social action.<sup>40</sup>

The research on faith-based community organizing covers a wide range of themes and focus areas, among them the issue related to religion and social justice focusing by examining the theological and ethical foundations of faith-based organizing<sup>41</sup> and how religious teachings inspire community engagement.<sup>42</sup> In community empowerment, the focus of this study is investigating how faith-based organizations empower marginalized communities by fostering leadership development and civic engagement.<sup>43</sup> Interfaith Collaboration which focuses on exploring how faith-based organizing efforts often involve interfaith collaborations and the challenges and benefits of such partnerships.<sup>44</sup> Research has also focused on the effectiveness of faith-based organizations in advocating for policy changes at local, state, and national levels.<sup>45</sup> Several academic journals and publications have dedicated space to research on faith-based community organizing, for examples include the "Journal of Religion and Society," "Journal of Community Practice," and books like "Faith-based Organizing: The State of the Field."<sup>46</sup> In conclusion, research on faith-based community organizing has contributed to academic understanding, influenced public policy discussions, and shaped the strategies of community organizers and religious institutions.

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<sup>40</sup> Mary Ann Ford Flaherty and Richard L. Wood, 'Renewing Congregations: The Contribution of Faith-based Community Organizing', 2002, 2-36. [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/soc\\_fsp/6/](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/soc_fsp/6/); Wood, 'Religion, Faith-based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice,' 80-99; Fulton, 'Fostering Muslim Civic Engagement through Faith-based Community Organizing' 23-34; Wood and Fulton, *A Shared Future: Faith-based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy*, 229-42.

<sup>41</sup> Christens, Jones, and Speer, "Power, Conflict, and Spirituality: A Qualitative Study of Faith-based Community Organizing," 1-13.

<sup>42</sup> Chaves and Tsitsos, "Congregations and Social Services: What They Do, How They Do It, and with Whom," 660-83.

<sup>43</sup> Oyakawa, "'Turning Private Pain into Public Action': Constructing Activist-Leader Identities in Faith-based Community Organizing." [Master Thesis].

<sup>44</sup> Uysal, "Peacebuilding through Interfaith Dialogue: The Role of Faith-based NGOs," 265-77.

<sup>45</sup> Beth Schaefer Caniglia, Robert J Brulle, and Andrew Szasz, "Civil Society, Social Movements, and Climate Change," in *Climate Change and Society*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2015), 235-68, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199356102.003.0008>.

<sup>46</sup> Mark R. Warren and Richard L. Wood, *Faith-based Community Organizing: The State of the Field* (New York: Interfaith Funders, 2001).

The faith-based community organizing model known as the Gamaliel model is an approach to community organizing that focuses on faith-based organizing. It is named after Gamaliel, a biblical figure known for his wisdom and guidance.<sup>47</sup> This paradigm is founded on the notion that faith-based organizations and communities can be crucial in promoting social justice and addressing community issues.

### **Intersectionality in Community Organizing: Women-centered Community Organizing**

Women-centered community organizing is an approach that prioritizes the experiences, needs, and leadership of women in community-driven efforts for social change. It acknowledges the unique challenges and systemic inequalities that women often face, necessitating collective action. Existing studies on social movements have overlooked the influence of gender structures and identities on social movements, largely due to the prevalence of gender-based analysis in community organizing. This bias is exemplified by the dominance of the Alinsky model, which emphasizes “macho” strategies such as manipulative tactics and zero-sum games. As a result, this model shapes the organizational dynamics within broader community organizing and within individual women’s organizations. The division of labor between domestic and public spheres emphasizes the dominant role of men in public life. Men often dominate high-level negotiation processes, while women struggle to balance their typical female life rhythms with domestic responsibilities. It leads to neglect and difficulties in organizing women’s communities.<sup>48</sup>

The study of women-centered community organizing has emerged as a significant area of inquiry during the 1990s, marking a paradigm shift in the field of community organizing studies towards a departure from gender neutrality. The two main currents of community organizing, namely the Alinsky concept and the women-centered model, intersect in the study of community organizing, thereby examining how gender structures influence community

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<sup>47</sup> Wood, “Religion, Faith-based Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Justice,” 2–19.

<sup>48</sup> James DeFilippis and Susan Saegert, “Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment: Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker,” in *The Community Development Reader*, 2007, 729–48.

organizing.<sup>49</sup> Subsequently, this gave rise to distinct disparities in color within the patterns, models, and strategies of community organization, as exemplified by Alinsky-style and women-centered approaches, particularly in several dimensions, such as the conceptualization of human nature, politics and power dynamics, leadership, and the process of organizing.

The paradigm shift from the Alinsky model of community organizing to women-centered community organizing was a gradual evolution that has taken place over several decades as social movements, feminism, and awareness of gender-based issues have grown, among some key milestones and references that contribute to this shift, namely during the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing recognition of the need for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to community organizing that addressed issues related to race, class, and gender, *The Feminine Mystique* often credited with the second-wave feminist movement in the United States, which had a profound impact on women-centered organizing.<sup>50</sup> During the 1970s-1980s, the women's liberation movement gained momentum, leading to women's centers, women's studies programs and organizations focused on women's rights. Grassroots feminist organizations started to apply community organizing principles to address issues like reproductive rights, domestic violence, and workplace discrimination. *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949) is a foundational feminist text that laid the groundwork for later feminist movements and women's organizing efforts.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, around the 1990s and 2000s, intersectional feminism became a central tenet of many women-centered community organizing efforts. Organizations and activists began explicitly addressing the intersection of gender with race, class, sexuality, and other identities. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde gives the importance of recognizing and celebrating differences that have been influential in women-centered organizing.<sup>52</sup> Later,

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<sup>49</sup> Stall and Stoecker, "Community Organizing or Organizing Community?: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment," 20–25.

<sup>50</sup> Stall and Stoecker, 20–25.

<sup>51</sup> Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*," *Yale French Studies*, no. 72 (1986): 35–49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2930225>.

<sup>52</sup> Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New Jersey: Crossing Press, 1984), 40–45.

women-centered community organizing continued to evolve and adapt to the changing social and political landscape.

### **Evolving Community Organizing: From Alinsky to Women-centered Model**

The shift from the Alinsky model to women-centered community organizing has been a complex and ongoing process influenced by various social, cultural, and political factors. It reflects the broader recognition of the importance of gender equity and intersectionality in social justice movements. This shift represents an evolution in both approaches and focus. While the Alinsky model is effective in certain contexts, it often overlooks the equally important, yet often invisible, work of relationship-building, consensus-building, and individual empowerment that characterizes what Stall and Stoecker term as the “women-centered” mode.<sup>53</sup> The women-centered community organizing is often driven by women’s experiences and needs, recognizing the inter-connectedness of personal and political issues, prioritizing traditionally considered private concerns like childcare, domestic violence, reproductive rights, leadership, and women empowerment alongside broader systemic issues. Some key differences marking this paradigm shift from the Alinsky style of community organizing<sup>54</sup> to women-centered community organizing<sup>55</sup> can be seen in Table 1.

In summary, transitioning from the Alinsky model to women-centered community organizing signifies a more comprehensive acknowledgment of the imperative to address gender-based inequalities and empower women as community leaders and catalysts for change. This recognition underscores the necessity for inclusive efforts to effect social change and understand the distinct obstacles women encounter.

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<sup>53</sup> Stall and Stoecker, “Community Organizing or Organizing Community?: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment,” 729–56.

<sup>54</sup> Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, 63–98.

<sup>55</sup> Stall and Stoecker, “Community Organizing or Organizing Community?: Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment,” 794–756.

Table 1  
 Comparison between the Alinsky Model of Community Organizing and  
 Women-centered Community Organizing

<b>Alinsky Model of Community Organizing</b>	<b>Women-centered Community Organizing</b>
Power and Confrontation: The Alinsky model is known for its emphasis on building power through confrontation and agitation. It often involves challenging existing power structures and elites to achieve social change.	Gender-focused: Women-centered community organizing explicitly addresses gender-based issues and inequalities, recognizing unique forms of discrimination and violence faced by women.
Issue-Based Organizing: Alinsky-style organizing typically revolves around specific issues or grievances that galvanize the community. These issues may vary but are often related to economic and political injustices.	Empowerment and Leadership: This paradigm shift prioritizes the empowerment of women within the community. It involves leadership development programs that enable women to take on leadership roles and advocate for change.
Community-wide Approach: This approach aims to mobilize the entire community, regardless of gender, around a common issue or goal. Leadership is often based on the ability to mobilize people effectively.	Intersectional Perspective: Women-centered organizing adopts an intersectional lens, acknowledging that women's experiences are shaped by multiple intersecting factors, such as race, class, sexuality, and more. It strives to be inclusive of women with diverse identities.
	Collaborative and Inclusive: Women-centered organizing encourages collaboration and coalition-building with other social justice movements. It recognizes the importance of solidarity and working across various communities to address systemic issues.
	Policy and Systemic Change: While issue-based campaigns are essential, women-centered organizing often focuses on long-term policy change and challenging systemic inequalities perpetuating gender-based discrimination.

### Examining Intersectionality Between Faith-based and Women-centered Community Organizing Model

The faith-based foundation is integral to faith-based community organizing, which draws on religious traditions and involves collaboration with



churches, synagogues, and mosques.<sup>56</sup> The faith-based community organizing model may not inherently prioritize intersectionality as much as some other organizing approaches explicitly anchored in social justice and feminism. However, this doesn't mean that intersectionality can't be integrated into a faith-based organizing effort. While it may not explicitly prioritize intersectionality as its fundamental principle, it does acknowledge the complexity and interconnectedness of the issues that affect communities. Faith-based organizing aims to utilize religious communities' ethical and spiritual potential to bring about positive societal changes.<sup>57</sup> This instance serves as a significant illustration of the potential intersection between faith and action in the effort to achieve justice and equality. Women-centered community organizing is a strategic approach that emphasizes the lived experiences, requirements, and leadership of women in community-based initiatives that are designed to promote social transformation.<sup>58</sup>

The combination of faith-based and women-centered community organizing creates a powerful synergy, leveraging the strengths of each approach while addressing the unique challenges faced by women within and beyond religious contexts. Both models value shared values and a strong moral framework, but women-centered organizing emphasizes the lived experiences of women, who are often marginalized within traditional religious structures. This intersection encourages a feminist interpretation of religious texts and teachings, challenging patriarchal interpretations and advocating for gender equality as a matter of faith.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, while faith-based networks provide a pre-existing structure for women to connect and organize, women-centered organizing leverages these networks to create spaces specifically

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<sup>56</sup> Jones, "The Organizational Context of Faith-based Community Organizing: Effects on Member Civic Engagement," 361-374; Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-15; Clarke and Jennings, *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, 17-45.

<sup>57</sup> Garlington et al., "Making Structural Change with Relational Power: A Gender Analysis of Faith-based Community Organizing," 24-32.

<sup>58</sup> Ayu Anastasia et al., *Indonesian Women's Movements: Making Democracy Gender Responsive* (Jakarta: Women Research Institute (WRI), 2013), 19-85.

<sup>59</sup> Lift Anis Ma'shumah, "Teks-teks Keislaman dalam Kajian Feminisme Muslim: Telaah Metodologis atas Pandangan Feminis Muslim terhadap Penciptaan dan Kepemimpinan Perempuan," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender* 7, no. 2 (2012): 67-90, <https://doi.org/10.21580/sa.v7i2.650>.

designed for women's needs and leadership development.<sup>60</sup> It challenges traditional power dynamics within religious institutions, empowering women to take on leadership roles and advocate for changes that benefit women and families.<sup>61</sup> The emphasis on relational power and dialogue in both models is enhanced by women's often demonstrated skills in building consensus and fostering collaboration.<sup>62</sup> It allows women to use their voices within faith communities to challenge injustice, advocate for social change, and hold institutions accountable to principles of equality and compassion. Despite the potential challenges, such as navigating patriarchal interpretations of religious texts and building bridges with secular organizations, the intersection of faith-based and women-centered community organizing offers a powerful pathway for women to become leaders and agents of transformation within their communities and beyond.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, recent studies on faith-based and traditional actors wield a significant influence in shaping norms and community responses to issue related to women. Research presented in "Learning from Practice: Engaging Faith-based and Traditional Actors in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls"<sup>64</sup> provides valuable insights into the roles played by these actors and offers guidance on how to involve them in prevention efforts effectively. A key finding is that faith and culture can perpetuate harmful norms but offer a powerful framework for promoting non-violence and gender equality. These actors significantly influence communities, serving as influencers, gatekeepers, and policy shapers. The study recommends a context-specific approach, emphasizing the importance of building trust, identifying champions within these groups, and leveraging religious teachings that promote women's rights.

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<sup>60</sup> Mizrahi and Greenawalt, "Gender Differences and Intersectionality in Community Organizing," 432–63.

<sup>61</sup> Azza Karam, "Faith-Inspired Initiatives to Tackle the Social Determinants of Child Marriage," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 13, no. 3 (2015): 59–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2015.1075754>.

<sup>62</sup> Garlington et al, "Making Structural Change with Relational Power: A Gender Analysis of Faith-based Community Organizing," 24–32.

<sup>63</sup> Elisabet Le Roux and Selina Palm, *Learning from Practice: Engaging Faith-based and Traditional Actors in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls* (New York: UN Women, 2021), 9–31.

<sup>64</sup> Roux and Palm, 9–12.

Ultimately, research on faith-based organizing, social justice movements, and community organizing principles provide insights into how intersectionality can be integrated into organizing efforts, by incorporating a gender perspective into the faith-based community organizing, it is possible to guarantee that women's perspectives are neither overlooked nor marginalized. It requires understanding individuals' obstacles and constraints within religious societies, including gender disparities and rigid gender norms. By proactively integrating women into decision-making processes and leadership positions, we can create a more inclusive and empowered environment for action that authentically reflects the diverse variety of experiences within faith-based organizations.

### **A Look at Landscape Study of the Community Organizing Scene in Indonesia**

Community organizing in Indonesia is a crucial area of research for understanding the dynamic and multifaceted processes of social change within the country. Several key aspects are frequently explored in community organizing research in the Indonesian context, including studies on community participation and examining the extent to which local communities are involved in identifying problems, planning solutions, and implementing collective actions. Research also examines the dynamics of community empowerment, investigating efforts to increase access to resources and enhance the capacity of communities to acquire knowledge and mobilize for change. Another important area of study is the role and influence of local leadership, analyzing the characteristics, strategies, and collaborative efforts of community leaders in mobilizing their constituents. Additionally, research explores the interplay between community organizing and broader social and political issues in Indonesia, such as human rights, environmental concerns, and grassroots movements for political reform.

The study of community participation focuses on the level of community participation in the community organizing process in Indonesia. It includes the extent to which local communities identify problems, plan solutions, and implement actions. For example, Laily and Putro,<sup>65</sup> determines the level of

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<sup>65</sup> Elida Imro'atin Nur Laily and Roestoto Hartojo Putro, "Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Perencanaan Pembangunan Partisipatif (Studi Kasus tentang Partisipasi Masyarakat Desa Sugio

community participation in the development of market expansion. While in the study of community empowerment, the emphasis is on efforts to empower the community through community organizing. It includes increasing the community's access to resources and enhancing its capacity to acquire knowledge.

The study of the influence of local leaders in community organizing includes an analysis of the characteristics and strategies of leaders in mobilizing communities,<sup>66</sup> as well as an examination of the issue of cooperation between organizations involved in community organizing, be it NGOs, government, or local communities. Community organizing research also concentrates on the relationships between community organizing and social and political issues in Indonesia. It includes human rights, the environment, and political change. The discussion suggests that community organizing has not been extensively investigated as a study discipline that specifically examines the dynamics of the women-centered model and has not yet analyzed the integration of religious values in women's empowerment. Consequently, women's empowerment work generally concentrates on the program aspect rather than the pre-program aspect of community organizing. Nevertheless, community organizing research is significant in developing sustainable policies by practitioners and policymakers and in improving comprehension of the function and impact of community organizing in Indonesia. However, further research is necessary to address the research gap and investigate innovative aspects of community organizing practice that integrate the aspects of the faith-based and women-centered models.

### **Faith, Unity, and Change: The Importance Study of KUPI's Network Women-centered Community Organizing**

Religion is central in the lives of Indonesians, the majority of whom adhere to Islam. This is in accordance with the most recent publication of the Pew

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dalam Pembangunan Perluasan Pasar Desa di Desa Sugio Kecamatan Sugio Kabupaten Lamongan),” *Jurnal Kebijakan dan Manajemen Publik* 3, no. 2 (2015): 186–90, [https://journal.unair.ac.id/KMP@partisipasi-masyarakat-dalam-perencanaan-pembangunan-partisipatif-\(studi-kasus-tentang-partisipasi-masyarakat-desa-sugio-dalam-pembangunan-perluasan-pasar-desa-di-article-9063-media-138-category-8.html](https://journal.unair.ac.id/KMP@partisipasi-masyarakat-dalam-perencanaan-pembangunan-partisipatif-(studi-kasus-tentang-partisipasi-masyarakat-desa-sugio-dalam-pembangunan-perluasan-pasar-desa-di-article-9063-media-138-category-8.html).

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Candland, “Faith as Social Capital: Religion and Community Development in Southern Asia,” in *Social Capital as a Policy Resource* (Boston: Springer US, 2001), 129–48, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-6531-1\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-6531-1_8).

Research Center's Key Finding from the Global Religious Future Project report. According to the Pew Research Centre,<sup>67</sup> religion is essential to the daily existence of Indonesians. Theological constructions, which are motivated by a lack of wisdom in interpreting religious postulates as justifications for rejecting gender equality, continue to heavily influence the practice of gender bias despite the Qur'an's recognition of the equality of position, rights, and obligations between men and women. The textual interpretations of verses and Hadist, in conjunction with the socio-historical context and influence of the interpreters, are generally dominated by patriarchal culture.<sup>68</sup>

The Indonesia Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI) is an Indonesian women's Ulama network dedicated to empowering women and promoting gender equality. The KUPI network adopts a community-organizing approach that is grounded in religious values. Multiple studies have been carried out on the KUPI Network, covering a range of subjects, including leadership,<sup>69</sup> the issuance of fatwas by KUPI, the inclusive approach used in fatwa formulation, concerns about preventing religious extremism, child marriage,<sup>70</sup> female genital mutilation, environmental issues such as waste management, and active participation in advocating for legislation addressing sexual violence crimes. Advocating for the issue of child forced marriage.<sup>71</sup>

Fahmina Institute, one of the KUPI network consortiums and a Cirebon-based NGO, is a faith-based, women-centered non-governmental organization that aims to bridge feminist ideals with religious beliefs. They achieve this via

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<sup>67</sup> Pew Research Center, "Key Findings From the Global Religious Futures Project," December 21, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/12/21/key-findings-from-the-global-religious-futures-project/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ade Irma Sakina and Dessy Hasanah Siti A., "Menyoroti Budaya Patriarki di Indonesia," *Share: Social Work Journal* 7, no. 1 (2017): 71, <https://doi.org/10.24198/share.v7i1.13820>.

<sup>69</sup> Inayah Rohmaniyah, Samia Kotele, and Rr Siti Kurnia Widiastuti, "Reclaiming an Authority: Women's Ulama Congress Network (KUPI) and a New Trend of Religious Discourse in Indonesia," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 11, no. 3 (2022): 60–70, <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2022-0068>.

<sup>70</sup> Taufik Hidayatulloh and Bahro Syifa, "Analysis Study of the Movement of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI) in Against Sexual Violence and Child Marriage," *SMART: Journal of Sharia, Traditon, and Modernity* 2, no. 2 (2023): 127–42, <https://doi.org/10.24042/smart.v2i2.16044>.

<sup>71</sup> Arifah Millati Agustina and Nor Ismah, "Challenging Traditional Islamic Authority: Indonesian Female Ulama and the Fatwa against Forced Marriages," *Journal of Islamic Law* 5, no. 1 (2024): 125–46, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i1.2319>.

several strategic methods, including facilitating dialogue among women religious leaders. Fahmina tries to bridge communication between religious leaders and feminist groups so that the two can collaborate. When generating knowledge products, Fahmina selects feminist theories that align with the local context and Islamic beliefs, such as the principles of justice and equality. Fahmina's empowerment initiatives involve conducting programs that teach individuals about gender equality by establishing connections between feminist concepts and religious beliefs. This knowledge-building effort covers a range of platforms, including bulletins and publications, which address gender issues within a theological framework. Its purpose is to enhance comprehension and support for gender equality. Fahmina aims to establish a platform for positive discourse between feminism and religion using this strategy and educate the community about the significance of gender equality within the religious framework.<sup>72</sup>

Fahmina Institute programs related to gender equality have had a significant impact on society, among others: increasing public awareness of gender issues and the importance of the role of women in various aspects of life; dialogue between religious figures and feminist activists that helps reduce resistance to feminist ideas in a religious context; programs designed to empower women giving women access to the resources and knowledge needed to enhance the position of women within society; the development of knowledge products; and the emergence of male models that more support gender Equality, as well as changes in attitudes in society towards women. The programs carried out by the Fahmina Institute have significantly impacted society, including raising public consciousness about gender-related issues and the significance of women's roles in different spheres of life. These programs have also facilitated dialogues between religious leaders and feminist activists, thereby reducing opposition to feminist concepts within a religious framework. Additionally, the institute has designed initiatives to empower women by providing them with the necessary resources and knowledge to improve their standing in society. Furthermore, the institute has contributed to developing knowledge products and emerging male role models that actively support gender equality. Consequently, there has been a shift in societal attitudes towards women.

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with Rosidin, the Director of Fahmina Institute, July 22, 2023.

The empowerment work conducted by the Fahmina Institute involves an extensive process of building connections and cultivating relational power. This concept of relational power is formed through a shared awareness of women's issues. Consequently, the first Indonesia Women Ulama Congress held in Cirebon, served as a pivotal moment for the success of faith-based women-centered community organizing. The most effective approach to incorporating the faith-based and women-centered community organizing model into KUPI practice and its network is to create a framework combining the Alinsky, Faith-based, and women-centered models. This framework can serve as a best-practice guide for developing a study on community organizing that maximizes synergies between these models.

The establishment of women's ulama networks signifies a comprehensive effort to create social networks, leading to the development of a movement focused on promoting the acknowledgment of female ulama (clerics). The efforts to gain recognition for women's ulama are essential for establishing the credibility of religious interpretation based on sacred texts to promote women's empowerment. This scholarly essay proposes a conceptual framework combining faith-based community organizing with women-centered community organizing.

In the context of the conceptual model of faith-based women-centered community organizing, it is observed that women ulama have historically faced marginalization and lack of recognition. It has resulted in religious values/ laws products often reducing women to simple objects of religious law, primarily due to the prevailing dominance of male ulama or clergy. Consequently, the perspective of women's experiences has been excluded from the input in formulating legal products, values, and religious fatwas. This exclusion has led to the marginalization of women clerics and their lack of recognition as integral contributors to the process of formulating religious fatwas, which inevitably possess significant societal implications.

This historical context disproves the necessity for educated women to become more conscious of their clerical power through a range of strategies, such as capacity building for aspiring women to become leaders of women academics in the centers from different experience areas. This project has resulted in the establishment of many outcomes within the network of women scholars, which has indirectly influenced social transformation. These impacts extend beyond the individuals belonging to the female clerical cadres and

encompass the grassroots communities they support and engage within their areas of activism.

From the integration of the same struggle, common spiritual values and social capital networks converge to become the driving force in the emergence of what the writer considers as faith-based women-centered community organizing, which encourages broader participation and self-reliance, giving rise to a knot of women's clerical networks that are flexible and not limited by organizational culture bound by standard operational procedure. The expansion of the network of female ulama is a concerted effort to establish the legitimacy of women in religious leadership roles. Consequently, religious discourse must incorporate women's lived experiences to inform the development of religious doctrines and practices.

Thus, by analyzing the faith-based women-centered community organizing employed by the KUPI network, we can understand the approaches that have proven effective in effecting social change, particularly related to women empowerment. Other organizations and communities can then utilize this knowledge to empower individuals and mobilize collective action. In addition, exploring the obstacles experienced by the KUPI network can provide valuable lessons for overcoming obstacles and adapting strategies to meet better the needs of the communities they serve. Ultimately, this analysis can contribute to the overall efficacy of international community organizing efforts.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Community Organizing is a dynamic and evolving field of studies, with its elements often adapted to fit the specific needs and context of the communities. Research in this area is pivotal in continually informing and shaping effective community organizing strategies. Community organizing is a dynamic and multifaceted process designed to empower individuals within a community to collaboratively address a wide range of social, political, and economic challenges impacting their lives. It involves various elements, each of which plays a crucial role in achieving its goals. Community organizing involves building relationships and trust, identifying common goals and priorities, mobilizing resources and support, and implementing sustainable solutions. Moreover, community organizing frequently entails continuous evaluation and reflection to guarantee the effectiveness and adaptability of strategies in response to evolving circumstances.



Filling the research gap in faith-based women-centered community organizing is crucial for understanding how religious institutions can effectively promote women's empowerment and social justice in their communities. Further research on these areas should focus on advancing knowledge in the faith-based women-centered community organizing field to uncover specific approaches through which religious values can support women's empowerment. This knowledge can inform the development of more targeted and effective strategies for promoting social justice and gender equality within communities.[s]

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